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Mythology of Ancient Iran

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MOTTO

. . . . . *Ere Babylon was dust,*
The Magus Zoroaster, my dear child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live,
Till death unite them and they part no more.

(Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*)

INTRODUCTION

Understanding of the mythology of ancient Iran requires a number of prefatory remarks. A substantial body of linguistic, religious, and social evidence warrants the assumption that, at one time, the bearers of the two cultures, which find their expression in the Indian *Rigveda* on the one hand and in parts of the Iranian *Avesta* on the other, formed a unity. In the following the term Indo-Iranian will be used to refer to the language, religious beliefs, and social institutions of this unity.

Evidence for the emergence of the Indo-Iranian type of language is found as early as 1800 B.C. in the Kassite word *šuriaš* (Indian *sūryas*) for the sun god and, further, in a number of proper names from Anatolia of about the same time. Some four centuries later, around 1400 B.C., the names of four divinities, *Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra,* and the two *Nāsatyas,* all of whom appear in the *Rigveda,* occur in a treaty between a Hittite king and a ruler of the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni in northern Mesopotamia. Passages from a Hittite treatise dealing with the training of horses contain technical terms such as *wartana,* "turn, lap," from Indo-Iranian *vart,* "to turn," in combination with the Indo-Iranian numerals for one (*aika*), five (*pantsa*), and nine (*nawa*), in order to indicate the number of rounds to be made in horse-racing contests. In addition, Indo-Iranian *aśva-šama,* "horse attendant, groom," Greek *hippokómos,* appears in Hittite as *aš-šušanni,* a term which designates the same profession.[1] The

full significance and implications of these scattered materials remain to be assessed. They are at least the oldest direct testimony for the existence of the Indo-Iranian type of language and of a number of divinities belonging to the Indo-Iranian pantheon at an early date.

Records for the time in which the Indo-Iranian unity was broken up (after 1500 B.C.?) are absent. The routes taken by the Iranian groups on their way to the Iranian plateau and its surrounding areas are obscure. Such groups as the Scythians, Sarmatians, and Alans in the north, the Sogdians, Šakas and Parthians in the east, and the Medes and Persians in the west, are attested in a direct way only several centuries later.

Our main source of information for Iranian mythology and religion is the *Avesta*, a collection of canonical sacred scriptures ascribed to *Zarathuštra* (630–553 or 628–551 or 618–541 B.C. according to different computations), which in its actual form constitutes only a relatively small part of the original corpus. Among other texts the *Avesta* comprises: (1) *Yasna*, "worship, adoration," texts of liturgical character. Chapters 28–34, 41–51, and 53 are known as *Gāthā*, "chant," Zarathuštra's own meditations and preachings, written in verse form and in a language, known as *Gāthic*, which differs from the language of the rest of the *Avesta;* (2) *Yašt*, "sacrifice," hymns of sacrificial character devoted to individual deities; (3) *Vendīdād*, "law against the demons," by and large a book of religious and ritual law which, in addition, contains mythological and legendary materials.[2]

Not one but two forms of religion are represented in the Avestan writings. The first is reflected in Zarathuštra's own words as expressed in the Gāthās and will be called *Zarathuštrianism*. It posits an ethical dualism between "Truth" (*Aša*) and "Falsehood" (*Drug*) which is regulated and topped off by a monotheism expressed by *Ahura Mazdā*. On another level is the opposition between "the Augmentative Spirit" (*Spenta Mainyu*) and "the Wicked Spirit." Ahura Mazdā is the father of Spenta Mainyu (*Yasna* 47. 3) and through him he is the creator of all things (*Yasna* 44. 7). Of

a somewhat similar nature is the relationship between Ahura Mazdā and the six "Augmentative Immortals" (*Ameša Spenta*). These entities, organs or aspects of Ahura Mazdā, are known as "Good Mind" (*Vohu Manah*), "Truth" (*Aša*), "Power" (*Xšathra*), "Devotion" (*Ārmaiti*), "Wholeness" (*Haurvatāt*) and "Immortality" (*Ameretāt*), each of which is connected with one of the elements: cattle, fire, metal, earth, water, and vegetation, respectively.

In the second form of religion represented in the *Avesta*, which has been termed *Zoroastrianism* after the later form (*Zoroaster*) of the name of Zarathuštra, several components are present. Besides Zarathuštrianism proper, the texts, which were composed by authors who wrote in the centuries following Zarathuštra's death, recommend the cult of both Indo-Iranian divinities such as *Mithra* (Indian *Mitra*) and *Haoma* (Indian *Soma*), who have their replica in the *Rigveda*, and of others such as the goddess *Anāhitā*, who do not have their counterpart in the Indian scriptures and, therefore, seem to be purely Iranian.

Centuries later, at the time Zoroastrianism had become the official state religion of the Sassanian empire in the third to seventh centuries A.D., it found its expression in theological books which were written in an idiom commonly referred to as *Pahlavi*, the local language of southwestern Iran of the time. In most cases where a precise date for the composition of any one of these books can be given, they seem to have been written after the Islamic conquest of Iran in the middle of the seventh century. There can be little doubt, however, that they are based on a tradition which goes back to the fourth century when Zoroastrian orthodoxy was established in a definite form. Two of the most important Pahlavi books are the so-called *Bundahišn*, the correct title of which is rather *Zandāgāhīh* or exposition of the information as provided by the Pahlavi version of the *Avesta*, and the *Dēnkart*. The first is a work on cosmology, the second an encyclopedia of religious lore.[3]

Another, later source for Iranian mythology is epic tales written in classical Persian among which the *Šāh-nāma* or

Books of Kings, the great national Iranian epic, written by *Firdausī* around the year A.D. 1000, ranks foremost. This epic literature will be used only sporadically, since it contains tales about mortal heroic personalities rather than narratives in which the gods are the major protagonists.[4]

Elements of Iranian mythology are, further, among those which were known to and incorporated by *Mani* (216–77) into the system known as *Manicheism*.[5]

A complete account of Iranian mythology is not intended here. Limitations of space have imposed restrictions on the extent of the materials which are presented. The following headings offer a list of selected topics of essential interest:

1. The world and its origin
   a. Zarathuštrian — b. Zoroastrian — c. Manichean
2. The origin of man
   a. *Gayōmart* — b. The first human couple — c. *Yima*
3. The gods
   a. Preliminary remarks
   b. Individual gods
      i. *Mithra* — ii. *Haoma* — iii. *Verethragna* — iv. *Vayu* — v. *Anāhitā* — vi. *Tištrya* — vii. *Xvarenah* — viii. *Zurvān*
4. Demonology
5. Eschatology
   a. Paradise — b. Judgment of the dead — c. Final resurrection

1. THE WORLD AND ITS ORIGIN

a. Zarathuštrian

No precise and comprehensive account of the ancient Iranian concepts and theories regarding the creation of the world is preserved in the *Avesta*. According to the usual in-

terpretation a famous Gāthic passage (*Yasna* 30. 4) mentions the two twin primordial spirits, the "better" and the "evil" one, a basic theme of Zarathuštra's philosophy, as engaged in the creation of "life" and "non-life." This passage, however, permits more than one interpretation.[6] In another, equally famous, passage (*Yasna* 44. 3–5) a series of questions is addressed to Ahura Mazdā: "Who . . . (is) the primordial father of Truth? Who has set the path of the sun and the stars? Who (is he) through whom the moon waxes and wanes? . . . Who holds the earth below and the clouds from falling down, who (upholds) waters and plants? . . . Which skillful (craftsman) created the lights and darknesses, which skillful (craftsman) created sleep and awakeness? Who (is he) through whom morning, noon and evening (exist) which remind the sensible (person) of his duty?" The answer to these obviously rhetorical questions is implied. It is Ahura Mazdā who is the author of all these performances and who is at the origin of the world and its organization. In a similar way the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., open with the statement, "A great god is Ahura Mazdā, who created this earth, who created that sky, who created man . . ." It should be noted that in both cases the term for the verb "to create" is *dā,* Indian *dhā,* Latin *facio, fēci,* "to put, make, create," and also that details as to the precise way the act of creation was performed are absent.

b. Zoroastrian

In the Pahlavi books the world's creation is discussed in great detail. The fullest account is contained in the first chapter of the Bundahišn while further details and variants are provided by other texts. In brief outline the Bundahišn account runs thus: "Thus it is revealed in the Good Religion. Ohrmazd [the later form of Ahura Mazdā] was on high in omniscience and goodness. . . . Ahriman [Angra Mainyu], slow in knowledge, whose will is to smite, was deep down in darkness . . . Between them was the Void . . . Ohrmazd

in his omniscience knew that the Destructive Spirit [Ahriman] existed, that he would attack and . . . would mingle with him . . . (and he knew) with what and how many instruments he would accomplish his purpose. In ideal form he fashioned forth such creation as was needful for his instrument. For three thousand years creation stayed in this ideal state . . . . The Destructive Spirit . . . was unaware of the existence of Ohrmazd. Then he rose up from the depths and went to the border from whence the lights are seen. When he saw the light of Ohrmazd intangible, he rushed forward . . . he made haste to destroy it. Seeing valour and supremacy superior to his own, he fled back to the darkness and fashioned many demons . . . . Then Ohrmazd . . . offered peace to the Destructive Spirit."[7] After the offer was rejected, Ohrmazd thought of a strategem to avoid an endless struggle and he proposed a period of nine thousand years, since he knew that "three thousand (years) would pass entirely according to the will of Ohrmazd, three thousand years in mixture would pass according to the will of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman and that in the last battle the Destructive Spirit would be made powerless."[7] This time, in his ignorance, the Destructive Spirit accepted Ohrmazd's proposal ". . . just as two men who fight a duel fix a term (saying), 'Let us on such a day do battle till night falls.' "[7] The motif of the nine-thousand- or twelve-thousand-year cycle occurs with variations in other Pahlavi texts.

More than one version of the creation of the material world is handed down in the Pahlavi sources. The same first chapter of the *Bundahišn* proceeds to say that, after the conclusion of the agreement between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, Ohrmazd "first created the Amahraspands [the later form of the Ameša Spenta], six originally . . . and the seventh is Ohrmazd himself . . . . Of material creation (he created) first the sky, second water, third the earth, fourth plants, fifth cattle, sixth man; the seventh was Ohrmazd himself."[7] A little further in the same text again, it is said with regard to each one of these six creations: "Now I shall describe their properties. First he created the sky, bright and manifest,

its ends exceeding far apart, in the form of an egg, of shining metal . . . The top of it reached to the Endless Light; and all creation was created within the sky—like a castle or a fortress in which every weapon that is needed for the battle is stored, or like a house in which all things are present."[7] Elsewhere, it should be added, the sky is described as "pillarless" or "supportless" and the earth is conceived to be in the center of the sky "like the yoke of an egg in the center of the egg." The *Bundahišn* account, then, continues: "Second from the substance of the sky he fashioned water . . . . Third from water he created the earth, round . . . poised in the middle of the sky . . . . And he created minerals within the earth and mountains which afterwards sprang forth and grew out of the earth . . . . Beneath this earth there is water everywhere . . . . Fourth he created plants . . . . Fifth he fashioned the . . . Bull . . . . Sixth he fashioned Gayōmart [the first man] . . . . He fashioned Gayōmart and the Bull from the earth . . . . And from the light and freshness of the sky he fashioned forth the seed of men and bulls . . . and he put (it) in the bodies of Gayōmart and the Bull that from them there might be progeny abundant for men and kine."[7]

Among the more unorthodox attempts to explain the genesis of the world is the one contained in the so-called Pahlavi *Rivāyat* ("tradition") to the *Dātastān ī dēnīk*, a theological work of miscellaneous character. In anthropomorphic fashion it is said that the various creations evolved from a manlike body. First the sky was created from the head, then the earth from the feet, the waters from the tears, the plants from the hair, the bull from the right hand and, finally, fire from the mind. Whatever the precise interpretation of the intricate Pahlavi passage and in spite of considerable variations in detail, a similarity of a general nature seems to exist between this myth and the contents of the well-known *Puruṣa* hymn of the *Rigveda* (X. 90). In this hymn certain parts of the body of Puruṣa, who has been sacrificed by the gods, are said to correspond, among other things, to parts of the cosmos. In itself, given the actual presence of representatives of Indian religious sects in Iran in

Sassanian times and the occurrence of references to products of Indian thought in scattered passages in the Pahlavi books, the assumption of a direct relation between the Iranian and the Indian myth could be argued for. Caution, however, is needed before reaching the conclusion of mutual influence or borrowing. A case in point is the discussion started by A. Goetze who compared two passages, one in the *Bundahišn* and one in a Greek medical text, both providing a description of the cosmos in terms of a human body, and decided for an Iranian origin of the Greek doctrine.[8] Further research has, in fact, shown that the chances are that the *Bundahišn* account owes its existence to foreign, either Greek or Indian, sources.[9]

As to the creation of the sky, stars, etc., the importance of the account found in the second chapter of the *Bundahišn*, which contains materials from periods as far apart as pre-Achaemenian and late Sassanian times, warrants a lengthy quotation. "Ohrmazd created the lights and set them between the heaven and the earth: the fixed stars, the non-fixed stars, then the moon, then the sun. After he had first created a sphere, he set the fixed stars in it, in particular the following twelve (constellations) whose names are: Lamb, Ox, Two Pictures, Crab, Lion, Spica, Balance, Scorpion, Centaur, Goat, Pail, Fish . . . Over the fixed stars Ohrmazd appointed four generals . . . As he [Ohrmazd] says: *Tishtrya* (Sirius) is the general of the east, *Sadwēs* (Antares) is the general of the south, *Wanand* (Vega) is the general of the north, *Haftōreng* (Great Bear) is the general of the north, and *Mēx-ī Gāh* (Polaris) also called *Mēx-ī miyān āsmān* (the peg in the center of the sky), is the general of generals . . . Ohrmazd created the moon . . . Over the moon he created the sun . . . He appointed sun and moon to the chieftainship over the stars . . . Between the earth and the (lower) sphere Ohrmazd placed the winds, the clouds, and the lightning-fire so that . . . Tishtrya . . . could take the water and cause the rain to fall . . . etc."[10]

c. Manichean

More space than is available here would be needed to explain in detail the Manichean position on the genesis of the world. Therefore, only its most essential and relevant features will be indicated. To the Manichean theologian the present status of man is the unfortunate result of a state of mixture between, what may be called in different terms, Mind and Matter or Good and Evil or Light and Darkness. The explanation of this situation in terms of an appeal to "rational" understanding can be considered as the main purpose of the Manichean cosmogonic hymn.

In former times, the two realms of Light and Darkness, which were ruled by the Father of Greatness and the Prince of Darkness, constituted a complete and balanced duality. This equilibrium was disturbed when the Prince of Darkness became attracted by the splendor of the realm of Light. Before the threat of his onrush the Father of Greatness evoked a number of hypostatic powers of light. Their defeat and subsequent disappearance into darkness lies at the origin of the state of mixture. A reminiscence of a by and large similar situation with regard to the beginning of the struggle between Ohrmazd and Ahriman will come to mind. The deliverance of the light particles of which the vanished powers of light consist is the main theme of the remainder of the myth.

Among the first hypostases which were absorbed by darkness was Primeval Man or *Ohrmizd,* as he is known in the Iranian sources. Another entity, known as the Living Spirit or *Mihryazd* ("god Mithra"), then set out to punish the demoniacal powers of darkness. From the skins of the defeated demons the skies, usually ten in number, were made, from their bones the mountains and from their flesh and excrements the earths, four or eight in number. In addition, the ten firmaments, the zodiac ("Within the zodiac he fettered those of the demons of Darkness that were most iniquitous, vicious and rebellious."), the constellations and

planets ("The twelve constellations and the seven planets they made rulers over the whole Mixed World . . .")[11] were created. Sun and moon were fashioned out of uncontaminated light particles, while the stars originated from only partially contaminated substance. Finally, the vegetable and animal worlds, both of which because of their origin contained undelivered light particles, came into existence.

2. THE ORIGIN OF MAN

a. Gayōmart

In the Bundahišn account from which passages were quoted above, Gayōmart appears as the sixth in the list of Ohrmazd's creations: "Sixth he fashioned Gayōmart, shining like the sun, and his height was about four cubits and his breadth equal to his height." Gayōmart's name can be traced back to an older form *Gaya maretan* (nominative singular *Gayō mareta*) which occurs in a number of Avestan passages. In a *Yašt* passage (*Yašt* 13. 87) worship is paid to the *fravaši* (approximately "soul") of Gaya maretan "who as the first heard the thought and teachings of Ahura Mazdā, (and) from whom he (Ahura Mazdā) fashioned the family of the Aryan lands, the seed of the Aryan lands." Elsewhere, his fravaši is mentioned, together with the fravaši of Zarathuštra, of Vištāspa (Zarathuštra's protector) and of a son of Zarathuštra, as worthy of worship because of their victory for the sake of Truth (Aša) (*Yasna* 26. 5). These data leave room for considerable variation in interpretation.

The later sources, however, provide a much clearer picture. In them Gayōmart appears as the prototype of mankind as is, for instance, indicated in the phrase ". . . My stock and lineage is from Gayōmart . . ." which occurs in a Zoroastrian catechism of probably post-Islamic date. An echo

of the prototype of mankind motif is heard in the Manichean *Gēhmurd,* the name of First Man. Another similar indication is the fact that in the lists of kings of Iran as found, for instance, in Firdausī, the name of *Kayūmarth* comes first. No certain argument, however, can be adduced for the assumption that Gayōmart as First Man has a counterpart in *Jēh,* the (primeval) whore, as First Woman. The passage in question, from the Pahlavi book known as *Zātspram* (34. 30–31): "In the scriptures it is thus revealed, that when Ahriman rushed into the creation, he had the species of the demon Whore of evil religion as companion, even as a man may join a whore-woman . . . And he appointed the demon Jēh . . . queen of her species, that is chief of all whore-demons . . . And he joined himself with the [demon Whore] . . . , for the defilement of females he was joined with (her), that she might defile females, and the females, on account of their defilement, might defile men, and they might turn from their duty" seems to state, in a general way, only what is known from elsewhere, namely that woman because of her subservience to Ahriman is the cause of the defilement of man.[12]

b. The first human couple

Mašya and *Mašyānag* in Avestan or *Mahlya* and *Mahlyānag* in Zoroastrian parlance, the first human (male and female) couple, originated from the seed of Gayōmart, who had died after having been slain by Ahriman. "When Gayōmart passed away and let fall his seed . . . one part (of it) was received by Spandarmat (the earth). For forty years it remained in the earth. When the forty years had elapsed, Mašya and Mašyānag grew out of the earth in the form of a rhubarb plant," as the *Bundahišn* relates the story.[13] After they had assumed human shape, Ohrmazd addressed them: "You are human beings, the father (and) mother of the world. Do your work in accordance with righteous order and a perfect mind. Think, speak and do what is good. Worship not the demons."[13] By acts contrary to these precepts, however, they

fell short of the performance expected of them and it was after fifty years only that they begot offspring.

In Manicheism the names of the first man and first woman, *Gēhmurd* and *Murdiyānag*, the Adam and Eve of other sources, not only are the exact verbal correspondences of Gayōmart and Mašiyānag, but the myth of their origin and nature shows features, which because of their technical character will not be discussed, similar to those of the Zoroastrian myth.

c. Yima

Domination of the world, in what may be termed a golden age, is one of the chief characteristics of Yima in the Iranian tradition. He is said to have been born as a son to *Vīvahvant* as a reward for the latter's performing the act of pressing the *haoma* (Indian *soma*) plant (*Yasna* 9. 4). In the next paragraph the same text introduces Yima as a ruler during whose reign no cold, heat, old age, or death existed. The latter statement is more fully developed in the second chapter of the *Vendīdād*. After having accepted Ahura Mazdā's proposal to become the protector and ruler of a world in which there will be no cold wind nor hot, nor disease nor death, Yima is presented by Ahura Mazdā with two golden implements, a whip and a goad. Prosperity becomes so abundant that the earth can no longer hold all "small and large cattle, men, dogs, birds, and red flaming fires." At the instigation of Ahura Mazdā, Yima resorts three times, after periods of three, six, and nine hundreds years, to the procedure of extending the earth "by one third more than it was before" by using the instruments given to him.

In the next episode (*Vendīdād* 2. 20–41) a different theme is struck. After Ahura Mazdā has warned Yima that destruction in the form of winter, frost, and floods, subsequent to the melting of the snow, are threatening the sinful world, he proceeds to instruct him to build a *vara*, "fortress or estate," in which specimens of small and large cattle, human beings, dogs, birds, red flaming fires, plants and foodstuffs will have to be deposited in pairs.

One more feature of the Iranian Yima is that he is known for having sided with Drug (Falsehood) against Aša (Truth), thus becoming a sinner (*Yasna* 32. 8; *Yašt* 19. 31–36). Reminiscences of this feature are found in the later literature as, for instance, in the Šāhnāma episode in which *Jamšēd* (the later form of Avestan *Yima xšaēta,* "Yima the lordly") falls victim to his own *hybris.* The same source, however, also depicts Jamšēd as the inventor of a number of arts and crafts in line with the motif of the golden age.

More than one parallel exists between Yima in the Iranian and *Yama* in the Indian tradition. The latter, whose father is *Vivasvant* (*Rigveda* X. 14. 5), the Avestan Vīvahvant, and whose twin sister is *Yamī* (*Rigveda* X. 10)—the Avestan *yēma* like the Indian *yama* also has the meaning "twin" (*Yasna* 30. 3)—is, however, primarily spoken of as a king who rules the dead (*Rigveda* X. 16. 9) and, in general, is connected in the Rigvedic and later Indian tradition with death.

3. THE GODS

a. Preliminary remarks

In recent years attempts have been made to discover a common structure of an exclusive nature in the religious traditions of the peoples who as a vehicle of expression used a language of the Indo-European type. Since the methods used and the conclusions reached by G. Dumézil, the initiator of these recent investigations, concern Indo-Iranian and Iranian religion and mythology—in fact, a number of them were inspired by a comparative study of Indian and Iranian materials—attention has to be given to his approach and its results.

As a starting point can be taken Dumézil's statement that "The Indo-Europeans possessed a concept of the social struc-

ture which was based upon the distinction and hierarchization of the three functions."[14] This social structure of the three functions (priests, warriors, and herdsmen, or: priests, warriors, and producers) is next taken to be reflected in Indo-European theological and mythological concepts. In more specific terms: "The first rank is occupied by two antithetic and complementary divine rulers, of whom the one (represented for example by the Rigvedic Mitra . . .) is the divine jurist, contract personified, 'rassurant, bienveillant, protecteur des actes et rapports honnêtes et réglés;' while the other (exemplified by Varuṇa . . .) is 'un maître inquiétant, terrible, possesseur de la *māyā*, c'est à dire de la magie créatrice de formes, armé de noeuds, de filets, c'est à dire opérant par saisie immédiate et irrésistible.' II [the second function] represented by Indra (also Vāyu) . . . calls for no special comment; while III [the third function] is particularly represented by the twin deities, the Aśvins."[14] And further: "In addition to dominating these main provinces, triplicity can be traced in a host of other places. Thus, we find triads of calamities (e.g. I injustice; II war; III famine) and of wrongdoing (I harming by charm; II physical violence; III theft); three types of medicine (I healing by charm; II surgery; III herbs); tripartite eulogies of kings; triple juridical mechanisms."[14]

The validity of the claim laid by Dumézil to the exclusively Indo-European character of the trifunctional structure was recently investigated by J. Brough, who was able to show that the same tripartition is also present in the Old Testament.[14] It is likely that further application of the same general, wide and elastic notions to other social structures and religions will yield similar results. A healthy dose of skepticism is, therefore, recommended with regard to a table of the Iranian pantheon such as:

God of beginning: Vāyu or Vāta, god of the wind

I. Function of sovereign: Ahura Mazdā and Mithra (surrounded by Sraoša and Rašnu) both accompanied by Airyaman.

II. Function of warrior: Indra Verethragna
III. Function of nutrition and collectivity: the two Nāhaithya and the goddess Ardvī Sūrā Anāhitā.[15]

The same trifunctional pattern has been used for the purpose of explaining the Zarathuštrian Ameša Spenta in terms of Indo-Iranian gods:

First function	Varuṇa Mitra	Aša Vohu Manah
Second function	Indra	Xšathra
Third function	2 Nāsatyas	Haurvatāt Ameretāt

In this case, too, the data do not quite seem to fit the table.[16]

To sum up, caution is needed when it comes to accepting any one of the definitions of individual Iranian gods or groups of gods which is derived from the trifunctional pattern. The safest way to arrive at such definitions is, rather, unbiassed analysis of the available evidence in each individual case.

b. Individual gods

Earlier in this survey attention has been drawn to the existence of non-Zarathuštrian, or Zoroastrian, divinities of Indo-Iranian inheritance. The following gods of such origin will be dealt with, (i) *Mithra,* (ii) *Haoma,* (iii) *Verethragna,* (iv) *Vayu.*

i. *Mithra:* The result of recent investigations into the nature of Mithra on the basis of the evidence contained in the Avestan *Mithra Yašt* is that both in origin and in essence Mithra is the god of contract. He is "the punisher of wrong . . . whose perception is thousandfold, who rules as an all-knowing potentate" (*Yašt* 10. 35); he "has a thousand ears" and "ten thousand eyes" and is "sleepless, (ever-)waking" (*Yašt* 10. 7); he is "Mithra the strong, whose spies are ten thousand" (*Yašt* 10. 24). Although he is connected with light and is said to be "the first . . . god to approach . . . in front of the immortal swift-horsed sun" (*Yašt* 10. 13), he is by no means

identified with the sun. Another aspect of Mithra is expressed in the statement that he is the one "who dispenses fat and herds, who gives power and sons, who bestows life and comfortable existence" (*Yašt* 10. 65). These qualifications can be considered the natural outcome of Mithra's role as a maintainer of law and order. Finally, from his function as "punisher of the wrong," another secondary aspect, that of a militant and well-armed defender of the "contract" originated.

Mithra's companions are, among others, *Sraoša* and *Rašnu* (*Yašt* 10. 41). The triad of Mithra, Sraoša (who is the personification and genius of "obedience" and "discipline") and Rašnu, or of *Mihr, Srōš,* and *Rašn,* as they are called in Pahlavi, acts throughout the Zoroastrian tradition as the judges of the souls of the dead at the *Činvat* bridge. Another companion is *Apąm Napāt* (Indian *Apāṃ Napāt*), or "grandson of the waters," a deity of Indo-Iranian inheritance, of whom it is said among other things that he "will further all supreme authorities and hold down (the countries) that are in turmoil" (*Yašt* 13. 95).

In Manichean theory the role assigned to Mithra was that of the Living Spirit or demiurge, as was pointed out above. Little if any evidence for this feature can be gathered from the *Avesta.* The Third Messenger (*Tertius Legatus*), on the other hand, who according to Manichean beliefs is going to complete the salvation of the lost light substance and who is a sun god, is also known under the names of *Mihryazd,* "god Mithra" (in the Parthian language), and of *Myšyy,* "Mithra" (in the Sogdian language). From this it appears that to the Parthian and Sogdian Manicheans Mithra represented the sun. This is obviously a later development only the very beginning of which is present in the *Avesta.*[17]

Coming to the Roman *Mithras,* it will be found that in his make-up both ancient Iranian elements as attested in the *Avesta* and elements of non-Iranian origin can be distinguished. The former, such as Mithras' relation to light, the representation of the ocean (*Apąm Napāt*) on Mithraic reliefs, the technical term *Persa,* "Persian," for a grade in the Mithraic mysteries, the use of the Iranian term *nama,*

"homage," in a Mithraic formula of worship, are too strong to lend support to the recently suggested non-Iranian origin of the Roman Mithras.[18] Among the latter, such frequent and essential scenes on Mithraic reliefs which represent the slaughter of a bull by Mithras, the subsequent ejaculation of the animal's sperm and the sprouting of ears of corn from its tail, can only be traced back indirectly and incompletely to the account of the killing of the primordial bull by Ahriman as provided by the Pahlavi books.

ii. *Haoma:* Among the Indo-Iranian gods there is hardly one of whom the characteristics in both the Iranian and the Indian tradition show so many similarities as Haoma (Avestan)-Soma (Indian). All the evidence points to the fact that haoma-soma, a plant (perhaps the rhubarb)[19] termed *zairi.gaona,* "golden-colored," in the *Avesta* and *hári,* "yellowish," in the *Rigveda* and growing on a particular mountain or mountains in both texts, the juice of which possesses intoxicating qualities, was already known, used and prepared for sacrificial purposes and worshiped as a god (Haoma-Soma) in the Indo-Iranian period. To Haoma-Soma the features of a provider of health and long life and of a remover of death (the standing epithet of Haoma in the *Avesta* is *dūraoša* which, with some reservation, may be translated as "keeping death far") are attached. While Zarathuštra in the Gāthās does not mention Haoma except for an indirect reference strongly condemning the "detestable fluid of that liquor" (*Yasna* 48. 10) for its evil effect, other passages praise its qualities (*Yasna* 10) and describe the legendary first occasions on which Haoma-haoma was pressed (*Yasna* 9, known as *Haoma Yašt*). In *Yasna* 9 it is told that *Vīvahvant, Āthwya, Thrita* (the Indian *Trita,* with or without the epithet *Āptya,* is also connected with the preparation of soma in the *Rigveda*) and *Pourušāspa* performed the first four successive pressings of haoma. As a result and reward each one of them begot a son. *Yima* was born to Vīvahvant and *Thraētaona* (the hero *Ferīdhūn* of the Šāhnāma), "who killed the dragon *Dahāka* [*Daḥḥāk* is slain by Ferīdhūn in

the Šāhnāma] who has three mouths, three heads, six eyes . . ." (*Yasna* 9. 8), to Āthwya. One of the two sons of Thrita was *Keresāspa* (the later *Karsāsp*) who "slew the horned dragon, who devours horses and men, (who is) poisonous, yellow . . ." (*Yasna* 9. 11). As a result of the last soma pressing Zarathuštra was born to Pourušāspa.

Another theme is struck in the Mithra Yašt (10. 88–90) in which Ahura Mazdā installs Mithra as a "promptly-sacrificing, loud-chanting priest" and as "the first mortar-priest [a priest using mortar and pestle to press the haoma] to elevate the . . . haoma stalks on the high *Harā* [mountain]." In addition, Haoma is introduced as paying worship to Mithra "with immaculate Barsman [sacrificial] twigs, immaculate libation, immaculate words." This situation in which Haoma acts as a priest who performs the haoma sacrifice himself and in doing so combines the functions of god, priest, and sacrificial substance became a significant part of later Zoroastrian ritual and liturgy.[20]

iii. *Verethragna:* The etymological connection between the Iranian word *verethragna* and the Indian *vṛtrahán* has since long been noticed. In India the killing of a dragon or demon *Vṛtra* is attributed to the god Indra and his specific epithet is *vṛtrahán* or "slayer of Vṛtra." In fact, the Vṛtra myth is an essential feature of Indra. Although the etymological representative of the Indian Indra occurs in the *Avesta,* it is only the name of a demon who both in character and in importance is far removed from the Indo-Iranian and Indian Indra. The counterpart of the demon Vṛtra is totally absent. Instead, there is a common noun *verethra,* the exact meaning of which ("defense, hostility"; "attack, victory"; "strength, valor") is still under discussion. By and large two main positions have been held in the face of this evidence. One, assuming the Iranian tradition to have stayed closer to the Indo-Iranian than the Indian, maintains the existence of an Indo-Iranian *vṛtraghan,* a reconstructed form explaining both the Iranian and the Indian phonological development, with the

meaning "smasher [*ghan*] of hostility [*vṛtra*]." In India this word would, then, have been identified with the slaying of the dragon by Indra and wrong interpretation of *vṛtra* would have resulted in a dragon or demon called Vṛtra. The other position holds that Indo-Iranian *vṛtraghan* already had the meaning "slayer of Vṛtra." In that case, the Iranian development would be secondary and the Indian tradition would have preserved the original Indo-Iranian concept.

A number of interesting features of Verethragna, which may be taken as the hypostasis of the noun *verethragna* in the sense of "victoriousness," is contained in *Yašt* 14. In the first part of that text (14. 1–28) ten incarnations (wind, bull, horse, male camel, boar, young man, falcon, ram, male antelope, warrior) of Verethragna are listed. Next (14. 29), the gift of virile potency, strength of arms, vigor of body, and sharpness of vision as presented by Verethragna to Zarathuštra is mentioned.

Most of the evidence contained in the later Zoroastrian sources confirms the general character of Verethragna as a god of victoriousness, who is then known as *Varhrām, Vahrām,* or *Bahrām.* Testimony from outside the boundaries of Iran is to be found, for instance, in the Armenian *Vahagn,* a destroyer of monsters, in Mithraic reliefs showing Verethragna-Heracles next to a boar, in proper names of the Šakas in eastern Iran from the first through third centuries, and in the Sogdian *Vašagn,* the name of the twentieth day of the month over which Verethragna similarly presides in the Zoroastrian calendar.

iv. *Vayu:* In recent years much effort and ingenuity has been spent on the interpretation of the god *Vayu,* "wind, air," who in form corresponds to the wind god *Vāyu* of the *Rigveda.* In *Yašt* 15, devoted to him, it is first said that Ahura Mazdā worshiped him (15. 2–4), a characteristic which he shares with other gods such as Mithra (*Yašt* 10. 123), Anāhitā (*Yašt* 5. 17), and Tištrya (*Yašt* 8. 25) to whom also worship is paid by Ahura Mazdā. Then follows a series of mythical

heroes who sacrificed to Vayu and finally comes a list of qualifications, epithets, and names (15. 43–48) by which Vayu is to be invoked. On the basis of these data and of the evidence of the later Sassanian Zoroastrian sources the suggestion has been made that already in ancient times Vayu possessed a "good" and an "evil" side. In addition, the double-natured Vayu was promoted to the function of initial god as shown in the table reproduced above (p. 346). Finally, he was compared with and transposed into the Zarathuštrian Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu. At the moment such a genetic analysis of Vayu does not seem to be borne out by the available data.

In the Pahlavi texts a clear distinction exists between the personal deities which are referred to as the good *Vāy* and the evil *Vāy*. The first assumes the protection of the righteous Zoroastrians in that he takes the souls of the departed by the hand and leads them across the *Činvat* bridge toward their determined place. His evil counterpart, identified with the demon of death, fills the opposite role of being harmful to the soul. Of a different nature is another aspect of Vāy which also appears in the Pahlavi sources. "Vāy, once the god of the wind that blows between heaven and earth, has now become the intervening space between the Kingdom of Light above and the Kingdom of Darkness below. Within this impersonal element the struggle between the principles of Light and Darkness takes place . . . Vāy . . . has become a place of mixture between the powers of good and the powers of evil."[21] Further research will be necessary before the precise connections of these various functions of Vayu can be established.

Coming now to the non-Zarathuštrian, or Zoroastrian, divine entities of non-Indo-Iranian origin, the following will be briefly discussed, (v) *Anāhitā,* (vi) *Tištrya,* (vii) *Xvarenah,* and (viii) *Zurvān.*

v. *Anāhitā:* Information with regard to the goddess Anāhitā is found in *Yašt* 5, which is devoted to *Aredvī Sūrā Anāhitā,* as her full name goes. In it she appears as "the goddess of

sacred waters; her dwelling place is amongst the stars. Full of strength and courageous nobility, she advances on a four-horsed chariot and crushes the demons, the tyrants, all hurtful beings. Ahura Mazdā has entrusted her with the care of watching over creation. All the gods invoke her and ask of her glory and riches. She assures the fecundity of nature and living creatures, extends her protection to the flocks and pastures . . . she is a slender maiden with noble bearing, who wears a crown of chased gold adorned with stars, ear-rings and a golden collar. She has a very trim waist, an ample bosom, and white arms adorned with bracelets. She has golden shoes on her feet, and a sumptuous cloak of otter skin embroidered with gold envelops her."[22] In terms of Avestan literary technique, this is an unusually rich and vivid description which has been traced to the possibility that the author of the Yašt had a statue of the goddess before him or in mind. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that this statue was of foreign origin.

Other indications also point to Anāhitā's foreign (Western) origin. Her name (*Aredvī* "humid"?, *Sūrā* "strong," *Anāhitā* "immaculate") resembles and may be an adaptation of the Greek *Anaïtis*, a goddess who was the object of worship in Asia Minor. Her name does not appear in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings until the first half of the fourth century, when she is mentioned by Artaxerxes Mnemon (405–359 B.C.) in the stereotype phrase, "May Ahura Mazdā, Anāhitā, and Mithra protect me." In the famous inscription of *Paikuli* of the end of the fourth century A.D. it is said that King Narseh set out from Armenia "in the name of Ohrmizd, all the gods and Anāhit the Lady." Both instances, far apart as they are in time, mark the stature of Anāhitā in the official pantheon.

vi. *Tištrya:* Concern with the way in which Tištrya (Sirius) produces rain is the reason behind the myth related in *Yašt* 8. After three metamorphoses, each lasting for ten days, into a young man, a golden-horned bull and a beautiful white horse, with yellow ears and golden bit (*Yašt* 8. 13–18), Tištrya in the last shape meets with the demon *Apaoša*

(older form *Apavṛta,* perhaps "he who retains the waters") in the form of a black horse, with bald ears, back and tail (*Yašt* 8. 21). As the result of a fierce battle, which lasts for three days and three nights, Apaoša chases Tištrya from the *Vourukaša* sea. Tištrya, then, turns to Ahura Mazdā, who gives him the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers. Once more battle rages between the two opponents and this time Tištrya is the winner (*Yašt* 8. 28–29). As a result the waters are released and rain starts to fall.

Among the companions of Tištrya is *Satavaēsa* (Antares). Manichean theology assigned to *Sadwēs* the function of the Maiden of Light, an evocation of the Third Messenger. She is a rain goddess who causes rain, hail, frost, snow, thunder, and lightning to come from the clouds in a way which is reminiscent of the role assigned to Satavaēsa in *Yašt* 8. 33.[23]

vii. *Xvarenah:* Significant progress in the understanding of the Avestan *xvarenah,* corresponding to *farnah* in proper names of the Achaemenian period and to *farrah* in Middle and *farr,* "splendor," in modern Persian, was achieved by H. W. Bailey.[24] From his study it appears that from the well-attested concrete meaning "good things, riches" of xvarenah, a hypostasis with the sense "(Good) Fortune" was developed to which was attached the power to grant good fortune, success, and victory to kings, finally developing into the symbol *par excellence* of legitimate royal authority, as well as to heroes and men.

As to the myths which were developed concerning xvarenah once it was drawn into the sphere of divine hypostases, the Avestan texts know of three such myths. In one the "xvarenah of the Aryans" (*airyanem xvarenō,* nominative singular) is mentioned. Its function is among other things to assist in gaining victory over the non-Aryan lands (*Yašt* 18. 2). In the second, the "xvarenah of the Kavis" (*kavaēm xvarenō,* roughly corresponding to "royal xvarenah") is in Yima's possession. After Yima has sided with Falsehood the xvarenah disappears from him in the shape of a hawk

(*Yašt* 19. 34–35). Mithra, Thraētaona, and Keresāspa each obtain one third of it and as a result Thraētaona and Keresāspa are enabled to perform the heroic deeds for which they are traditionally known. Yet another kind is Zarathuštra's xvarenah which in the *Dēnkart* (600. 20 ff.) is said to have descended in the likeness of fire into the body of his mother whence it became part of his own. This account introduces a new element into the xvarenah concept although the connection of xvarenah with fire is already attested in the *Avesta*.[25]

viii. *Zurvān:* Explicit textual or other confirmation for the existence of *Zervanism*, the essential feature of which is the cult of *Zurvān* (Avestan *Zrvān*), the god of time and fate, in early times is hard to find. The evidence which has been produced for the thesis that Zervanism is an old Iranian cult is not convincing. The same uncertainty as to its validity applies to the further thesis, which was developed by H. S. Nyberg,[26] that all of the *Avesta* has to be viewed against the background of a cult of which Zurvān was the supreme god. The likelihood seems to be rather that "Zervanism, with its speculations on Time, its apparatus of numbers, and the idea of the world-year, is the outcome of contact between Zoroastrianism and the Babylonian civilization. It originated in the second half of the Achaemenian period."[27] However this may be, direct evidence for Zervanism does not appear until Sassanian times, when Zervanism and Zoroastrianism probably were two branches of the official church. This differentiation may have originated in regional sectarianism with Zervanism prevalent in southwestern and orthodox Zoroastrianism in northern and eastern Iran.[28]

The main tenets of the Zervanite myth of the origin and genesis of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, which is preserved in both non-Iranian (Armenian and Syriac) and Iranian (Pahlavi) sources, where it is embedded in and between passages of an orthodox Zoroastrian nature, have been expertly described and studied by R. C. Zaehner.[29] In outline the story runs thus: "When nothing at all existed, neither

heaven nor earth nor any other creature which is in heaven or on earth, there existed one, Zurvān by name . . . For a thousand years he sacrificed that perchance he might have a son whose name should be Ohrmazd, who should create heaven and earth and all that is in them. After having thus sacrificed for a thousand years he began to ponder, 'Are these sacrifices which I offer of any use, and shall I have a son Ohrmazd, or do I strive in vain?' And while he considered thus, Ohrmazd and Ahriman were conceived in their mother's womb [perhaps to be interpreted as the female half of Zurvān himself, who was considered to be of hermaphrodite nature] . . . Now Zurvān . . . made a vow that whichever should come into his presence first should receive the kingdom from him. Ohrmazd . . . divined his thought and somewhat guilelessly divulged it to Ahriman . . . Ahriman . . . ripped the womb open . . . and presented his detestable person to his father Zurvān . . . When Ahriman came into the presence of Zurvān, he said: 'I am thy son, Ohrmazd.' . . . Zurvān, however, denied him because he belonged to darkness, was stinking and loved to do harm. He wept: and even as he talked to Ahriman, Ohrmazd was born, bright and sweet-scented; and Zurvān knew that it was his son Ohrmazd . . . Ahriman approached Zurvān and reminded him of his vow, addressing him thus: 'Take care, didst thou not make that vow, "To the first to come I shall give kingship."' And Zurvān replied: 'Begone, Satan; I have made thee king for nine thousand years, and I have made Ohrmazd to rule above thee, and after the allotted time Ohrmazd shall reign and order all things to his will.'"

Elements of similarity, all the details of which are not clear, between Zurvān and the Manichean Father of Greatness (the ruler of the realm of Light) must have been responsible for the selection of the designation *Zrwā* for the Father of Greatness by the Sogdian Manicheans. The Buddhist Sogdians, on the other hand, used the name Zrwā to translate the name of the Indian god *Brahmā*.

Some doubt exists as to whether the lion-headed figure of Mithraic art represents Zurvān or Ahriman. It can, perhaps,

be argued that the former, traditional hypothesis is still more acceptable than the latter.[30]

4. DEMONOLOGY

Characteristic of the *daēvas*, the powers considered as hostile by Zarathuštra and, therefore, roughly corresponding to "demons," is, in Zarathuštrian parlance, that they choose wrong, when it comes to making up their mind whether to stand with the "good" or the "evil" side (*Yasna* 30. 6). Elsewhere in the Gāthās they are called, together with those who pay them worship, "the progeny of Evil Thought, of *Drug* (Falsehood), and of arrogance" (*Yasna* 32. 3).

Reflections of the Zarathuštrian attitude toward the daēvas are to be found in the Yašts, the *Vendīdād*, and the Pahlavi books. It can also be seen from these sources that the number of daēvas gradually increases along with the more and more dogmatic and schematic character of the Zoroastrian opposition between the powers of good and evil. By and large, it will be found, there is little significant change in their individual features which, in fact, are not too distinct to begin with. Their general *raison d'être* is to act as assistants to Ahriman in one function or other.

As for individual demons, two cases may be singled out. First, a group of five demons which are known from the *Vendīdād* and frequently occur as archdemons in the Pahlavi books. The names of three of this group, *Indra*, *Sauru*, and *Nānhaithya*, correspond in the Indian tradition to *Indra*, *Śarva* (an epithet or other name or consort of the god *Rudra*), and *Nāsatya* (an epithet of the twin *Aśvins*). In addition, it will be remembered that two of them, Indra and Nāsatya, are known as early as 1400 B.C. Secondly, the demon *Āz*, who appears in the *Avesta* as a masculine demon of relatively little importance. In the Pahlavi books, however, *Āz*, a female

demon, is known as the prototype of lust, greed, and "wrong-mindedness" in the Zoroastrian sense of the word. Of a similar nature is the role assigned to *Āz* in Manicheism. She is the personification of concupiscence and greed and she corrupts the soul of man so that he becomes blind to his divine origin.[31]

In both Manicheism and Persian epic literature borrowings from and continuation of the Zoroastrian tradition with regard to demons is evident. In Manicheism, *Ahrmēn* (Ahriman) is the opponent of Primeval Man (Ohrmizd); *dēv* (daēva) is the general designation for "demon" and *parīg* (Avestan *pairikā,* "witch") for "witch," *perī; xēšmān* (Avestan *aēšma*) is used for the demons of wrath; the *mazan* (Avestan *māzanya* "Mazanian demon") are demonic creatures; the *druxšān* (*drug* "falsehood") are female demons. In the epic tales, the *dīvs,* cruel, strong and wicked demons, and the *perīs,* who by a reversal of the original meaning are charming and pleasant females instead of hideous and wicked creatures, are frequently mentioned.

5. ESCHATOLOGY

a. Paradise

"Paradise" or, perhaps, rather "heaven" is referred to in the Avestan texts in different ways. One expression is *vahišta ahu,* literally "best existence," which later in the Persian language became *bihišt* with the meaning of paradise. The connotations attached to this expression are clear from the following passage, "The radiant quarters of *Aša* [Truth] we worship, where dwell the souls of the dead . . . the Best Existence of the *ašavans* [possessors of Truth] we worship, (which is) light (and) affording all comforts" (*Yasna* 16. 7). In a similar way the Indian *ṛtá,* which etymologically cor-

responds to the Avestan *aša,* is connected in a number of passages with the idea of heaven. This seems to point to a possibly Indo-Iranian origin of the concept that paradise or heaven is the abode of or at least thought of as being related to *Aša-Ṛtá.*[32]

Another designation of paradise-heaven is Avestan *garō nmāna,* which has been rendered as "house of praise," "house of treasure," or "house of reward." *Garō nmāna,* often with the epithet *raoxšna,* "shining," is the abode of Ahura Mazdā and the Ameša Spenta (*Vendīdād* 19. 32). It has recently been argued that it was thought of as situated above mount *Harā,* the first mountain created (*Yašt* 19. 1), which itself was part of it.

b. Judgment of the dead

In spite of some variations in detail the Zoroastrian doctrine on what happened to the individual's soul after death was consistent and uniform. Though well-known, an outline of this doctrine as it appears in the Pahlavi text known as *Mēnōk ī Xrat* deserves to be quoted. "For three days and nights the soul sits beside the pillow of the body. And on the fourth day at dawn (the soul) . . . will reach the lofty and awful Bridge of the Requiter [*Činvat* bridge] to which every man whose soul is saved and every man whose soul is damned must come . . . and it will (benefit by) the mediation of Mihr, Srōš, and Rašn, and will (needs submit) to the weighing (of his deeds) by the righteous Rašn . . . And when the soul of the saved passes over that bridge, the breadth of the bridge appears to be one parasang broad . . . And his own good deeds come to meet him in the form of a young girl, more beautiful and fair than any girl on earth . . . Then with his first step he bestrides (the heaven of) good thoughts, with his second (the heaven of) good words, and with his third (the heaven of) good deeds; and with his fourth step he reaches the Endless Light which is all bliss . . . And for ever he dwells with the spiritual gods in all bliss for evermore." In the case of the soul of the damned his body, after three days and three nights, is carried off and dragged

to the Činvat bridge by a demon and thence to hell. He is met by "a young girl who has no semblance of a young girl," passes through the three hells of evil thoughts, words, and deeds, and ends with his fourth step in the presence of Ahriman and the other demons.[33]

c. Final resurrection

In the *Avesta* the term *frašō.kereti* (Pahlavi *fraškart*), of which the exact translation ("rehabilitation" or, perhaps, "miraculization," if any weight can be put on the Armenian loanwords *hrašk'* and *hrašakert*, "wonder" and "wonderful") is uncertain, is used to refer to the final miraculous transformation and consummation which the world will experience. This transformation is described as "ageless, immortal, undecaying, not-rotting, ever-living, ever-prospering, self-sufficient" (*Yašt* 19. 11).

What is meant, becomes clear from the Pahlavi books. The *fraškart* is both a final judgment, different in character and purpose from the judgment of the individual soul of the deceased, and it also represents the ultimate victory of Ohrmazd over Ahriman. The whole dramatic event, therefore, falls into two main acts. In one of them the final defeat and doom of Ahriman and each of his assistants is enacted, while the other deals with the resurrection of the bodies of the dead. This resurrection is brought about by the *Sōshyans* (Avestan *saošyant*), a term which refers to each of the three posthumous sons of Zoroaster, who appear, at intervals of 1000 years, during the last period of 3000 years. After the bodies of the dead have been raised and have been reunited with their souls, both the saved and the damned have to suffer an ordeal by molten lead for a period of three days. The ordeal is the final punishment for the damned, but to the saved it "causes no discomfort . . . for the surging metal seems to them like warm milk." Finally, the Sōshyans insure the immortality of the resurrected by preparing "the white Hōm (Haoma), (the drink of) immortality," and "the material world will become immortal for ever and ever."[34]

NOTES

1. H. W. Bailey. "A problem of the Indo-Iranian vocabulary," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* XXI (1957), pp. 64–66.
2. These and other parts of the *Avesta* were translated by F. Wolff, *Avesta, Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen* (1910; reprinted in 1924). The *Gāthās* were translated by Chr. Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's des Awesta* (1907); by J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre, étude critique avec une traduction nouvelle des Gāthā* (1948), rendered into English by Mrs. H. Henning, *The hymns of Zarathushtra* (1952); and by H. Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* I–II (1959). Of the *Yašts* there exists a translation by H. Lommel, *Die Yäshts des Avesta* (1927).
3. An up-to-date translation of neither of these works is available. The *Bundahišn* was translated by E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts* I (1880); for its first and third chapter, R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian dilemma* (1955), pp. 276–336; for its second, W. B. Henning, "An astronomical chapter of the Bundahishn," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1942), pp. 229–48. The contents of the *Dēnkart* are surveyed by J.-P. de Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, le Dēnkart* (1958).
4. A translation in French accompanies J. Mohl's edition of the Šāhnāma (1838–78); this translation was also published separately (1876–78). There exists also an English translation by A. G. and E. Warner (1905–12).

Th. Nöldeke's "Das iranische Nationalepos," in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* III (1896–1904), pp. 130–221, of which an English translation was made by L. Bogdanov (1930), is still an excellent introduction to the Persian national epic. A. Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique* (1936) will also be found useful.

5. The literature on Manicheism is extensive. H.-Ch. Puech, *Le Manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine* (1949), is the best and most recent introductory book. It gives excellent references to primary and secondary sources.
6. H. Humbach. "Zur altiranischen Mythologie," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 107 (1957), pp. 367–71.
7. R. C. Zaehner. *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian dilemma* (1955), pp. 312–20.
8. A. Goetze. "Persische Weisheit in griechischem Gewande," *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* II (1923), pp. 60–98.
9. J. Duchesne-Guillemin. "Persische Weisheit in griechischem Gewande," *The Harvard Theological Review* XLIX (1956), pp. 115–22.
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